

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest.

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of giant corporations.

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will lead to higher consumer rates and lower quality service.

Nothing good can come of letting the cable companies get even larger. Diversity, service (the service that exists now is horrendous) and the point of view of the customer will all be sacrificed just so some fat cats can get even wealthier.

Haven't we learned a lesson with radio becoming a conglomerate? Opinion and diversity have gone right out the window. Somebody that expresses their constitutional right of freedom of speech is yanked off the air as retribution. This should be an America that stands up for the little guy not serves the rich and powerful.

Do we need another Upton Sinclair to describe "The Jungle" that we have lived in over the last several years? Even if we have such a person, he or she is labeled un-American, unpatriotic and on the side of terrorists. The right wing has taken a death grip on this country and another blow to the American body would be to allow these behemoths to get even larger. You must not allow this to happen. Control the problem while you have the chance, or we will suffer the consequences.

Since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the "deregulation" of cable, consumers have seen their rates jump an average of 59 percent — with some areas experiencing even more dramatic increases.

We are required to buy channels we don't want or need because the cable operators bundle them together. The quality of customer service often

reflects the fact that cable television is not a competitive market.

Meanwhile, the cost of cable modem service remains out of reach for many households, holding constant for years and selectively underserving rural and low-income Americans. The American people are watching the digital divide widen even as the need for access to high-speed networks increases.

The cable prices are ridiculous. It is a take it or leave it situation. If you don't like what they are serving, too bad, it will be the same tomorrow and the next day and so on it goes. They push religious channels and home shopping channels on you that fill up about ten spaces on your package. What if I am not a Christian right wing fundamentalist? What if I'm Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist or belong to the Church of Bob or the church of John Coltrane? What if I'm an atheist?

The shopping channels are the biggest junk peddlers I've ever seen. If I was going to do some home shopping, it would be on the internet not on some cable station.

The service, when you do get it, is horrible at best. When I moved into a new apartment and called up the cable company, they told me it would be two weeks until somebody could get out to hook it up. I would have to be at home between 12 and 5 pm. Well, I got up that day and ran some errands and was back home by 11 am. They didn't show up between 12 and 5. They showed up when I was out of the house and when I called up the company, the lady acted like it was my fault that I wasn't home when they came. She scheduled another appointment, two more weeks away, between 8am and 5pm and asked if I was going to be home this time. I told her I was home between the time she set, she said but not when they came out. One full month of no cable and horrible regular tv service where I lived. I had to put foil on my antenna, just so I could pick up ABC for the college football games.

Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments.

In many communities, the truly independent sources of local news,

information and culture come from the public channels produced at the local access centers. Unfortunately, local channels lack the resources to produce the programming that citizens want and need.

The last thing we need is to reward the anti-competitive actions of cable giants by permitting greater consolidation in ownership, reducing competition, and encouraging more of the same.

My local PBS channel is not sufficiently funded. The ignorant right wing agenda decides that they are going to take money away from programs like Sesame Street, and Ken Burns projects, so they can punish a viewpoint that differs with theirs. Gee, that sounds so much like somewhere else where they burned books because they contained useful knowledge. We don't want people to get an education because ignorance leads to victories in the fall elections.